Miss Jennie Dodd

The Bloomfield Record.

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LITERATURE OF THE DAY.

THE YEDDAS.

Can it be supposed that when Dean Swift libeled humanity by degrading it below the level of the brutes in his dreadful fiction of the Yahoos he ever imagined that there existed aught that approximated toward the odious picture? Yet such is the case. There are, undoubtedly, races who attributes do, in various degrees, suggest, if they do not realize, the misanthropic fable of the man-beasts of Houyhnhnm Land. The Niam-niams of Africa, who live between the Gulf of Benin and Abyssinia, are said to have tails, a statement confirmed by Dr. Hubsh, of Constantinople, in 1851. The "hairy people" mentioned of old by Hanno, seem to have a real existence, apart from the gorilla, judging from Miss Bird's account of the Ainos of Japan, a strange, savage, and little-known race, supposed to be the aboriginies of that country, but now only to be found in the island of Yezo. They are, she says, of a most ferocious aspect, owing to the profusion of their thick, soft, black hair and beards, and to the singular fact that their bodies are commonly covered with a vigorous growth of black hair or fur, upward of an inch in length, and incrusted with dirt, for the Ainos never wash. Their food is a "stew of abominable things," and "a thick stew of putty-like clay, which is boiled with the bulb of a wild lily." They believe themselves to be descended from dogs, but other characteristics of this strange people are not unamiable. Beyond these instances, and presenting a far more striking resemblance to the Yahoo type, there are the Veddas or Weddahs of of Ceylon, their duplicates in Borneo and New Guinea, and kindred varieties discovered in the Philippine Islands, Terra del Fuego, and South America. Only none of these are so hateful as the creatures of Swift's invention. It needed that fierce indigation against his kind, which he has recorded in his epitaph, to depict them. The Veddas and similar races in the islands of the Asiatic Archipelago are described as the aborigines of their respective countries who have shrunk into the jungle and forest to escape from civilization, and have lived there for upward of two thousand years. They construct no habitations, but lodge in caves or trees or under overhanging rocks. They are stunted in size, seldom exceeding four feet eight inches in stature, and but feebly built, except as regards their arms, which the constant use of the bow renders very muscular, notwithstanding their short, ape-like thumbs. With this weapon they kill animals for food, devouring, besides, snakes, reptiles, wild honey, ants' eggs, and berries of all kinds. They lack both memory and foresight, cannot count or discriminate between colors, are filthy in their habits, and in everything save a rudimentary language of uncouth guttural sounds, and some dim vestiges of religion and social order, are as beasts of the field. Saddest, perhaps, of all, they never laugh. When they die they believe they become devils. Yet this benighted and outcast race, so low in organization, habits and character as scarcely to be distinguished from the monkeys of the jungle, among whom they live, *practice by instinct* virtues which are not too common in civilization. They never lie, steal nor quarrel. Some of these unfortunate creatures have been half-tamed by the Cingalese and set to out-door work, like the Yahoos by the Houyhnhnms. When the Prince of Wales visited the island, in 1876, certain of the jungle Veddas were actually caught in snares and traps to be exhibited to him; and one of the number—a female—positively died of frigid in being secured. It was not a humane transaction, but the Veddas are regarded merely as animals. Finally, it may be remarked, in connection with Swift's curious anticipation, that he placed Houyhnhnm Land near the great island-continent of Australia. It appears in the map of the first of "Gulliver" as due south of Nuyt's Land, in about 33° south latitude, and 125° east longitude. Now, Ceylon is but 55° west of this locality, though above, as New Guinea is just below, the equator. The Yahoos could not have been better accommodated.—*All the Year Round.*

SUICIDAL MANIA.

W. C. H., aged fifty, a laborer, who had four times attempted, at last committed suicide by drowning himself; a brother had drowned himself at the same spot; a sister poisoned herself, and another sister had attempted suicide. Among the three hundred cases I find but two in which heredity may be suspected, though I have not usually made inquiries as to this point. One man had an uncle who had poisoned himself, and a grandfather who cut his throat, both under the influence of drink; and a woman said her father had blown his brains out about a year before her attempt to poison herself. The temperament and dispositions, however, which prompt or inclines to suicide are no doubt matters of transmission from parents who have not taught or transmitted the power of self-government and the reverence for life which they themselves did not possess. Secondly, I cannot doubt but that the sentimental glamour thrown over suicide by some poets and novelists has had an evil result, which they would be eager to deprecate. I distinctly assert, for example, my belief that the poem of Thomas Hood, "The Bridge of Sighs," written with the sole object of evoking charity for the despised, has yet, with a certain class, tinged suicide with a halo of romance, and afforded a justification of cowardice and crime to the unreasoning and hysterical. Thirdly, many of the attempts that have come under my notice are distinctly attributable to the ordinarily violently exaggerated language of persons, perhaps especially mothers, of the poorer classes. "I'll break every bone in your body," is an ordinary way of expressing displeasure at some trivial offence of a child; and no one who has been forced to overhear a few family words" will wonder how that deed of violence, which is threatened with no intention whatever of accomplishment, becomes in a less guarded moment the suggestion of a crime which is familiar in language though never really contemplated hitherto in act. Brought up in an atmosphere of threats against life, what wonder if children proceed from the sin of word to that of deed?—*The Fortnightly Review.*

TROUT AND CO. A ROACH.

No sooner the thought than the rod is put together. The finest gut obtains is attached, a No. 7 hook thereto tied, and a cockroach lightly impaled. By standing on the crown of a willow, some fifteen yards off, I could see the head of my quarry, though he could scarcely see me by reason of the natural refractive and reflective. Very quietly I let my bait down on the water, and paid out the fine line to within three feet or four feet of the nose of the trout. With the utmost circumspection, with a slow, finest, gliding motion, the cockroach was lowered on—on—on—till within a few inches of the fish's mouth. Then I withdrew it, as if to take it entirely from the water. No notice took he. My heart again failed me, well nigh, at least, for I had tried by this time persistently for some weeks to capture this lordly fish, and as each failure was added to its predecessor, my desire of possession naturally grew greater and greater. However, I very, very gently moved up a few yards, and again watched the bait down toward the stolid fish. This time the cockroach did sink deeper in the water, and, with a sort of chuckle, I watched it gradually approach his muzzle in the same plane, and not as before, rather above. As it neared him, to my inexpressible joy, I saw his under lip show as if it had, by some mechanical impulse, connected with the bait, unconsciously moved. Nearer passed the bait unwind, the jaw lowered yet, and, like a child taking a sop, like an unfledged bird taking in a worm, it passed behind the portals of that polished head. With suppressed breath and palpitating heart I counted—one, two, three, four, five—then, with a side movement, I struck; not violently, but swiftly; not mightily, but strongly. Ye gods, he was hooked, and out yards in the stream he sped! Of course, he was only landed after the usual interregnum of splendid struggling, and I become the hero of the hour in the possession of this splendid fish.—*The Practical Fisherman.*

PRE-HISTORIC ARIZONA.

Right where Prescott now stands, can be traced the walls of an ancient city, and if we are to judge from the wearing down of mountains and the covering of earth that has almost hidden the buildings from being traced, we should say that many thousands of years have passed and gone since the people who once inhabited a prosperous city, where now stands Prescott, the most beautiful village in Arizona, took their departure or became extinct. That a large and flourishing city once existed here, there can be no doubt, as the evidences are proof positive and deny contradiction. Very often relics are taken from excavations of great depth, and we are inclined to believe that the former inhabitants of Arizona were a curious but a somewhat civilized race. Again, the geologist and antiquarian have a rich field for study in Arizona, for go where you may you are continually treading on the bones and graves of a race of whom nothing is known, other than that they lived in houses and had large buildings of worship.

A NEW KIND OF SCALE.

A Frenchman has invented a new system of scales that dispenses with separate and detachable weights. The weighing is done instantaneously by means of a metal slider moving on graduated beams that pertain to the apparatus. The mechanism is simply a combination of articulated levers with a double scale-beam. The object whose weight is desired is placed on the scale-pan, and the double beam rises at the extremity opposite the zeros. Then move the larger slide along the beam until the latter assumes a horizontal position, and if the index falls between two divisions, move the slide back to the nearest division, and use the slide on the small beam to balance the scales. The sum of the readings of the two scales gives the weight sought. A properly graduated rule placed between the beams may be made to give instantly the price of any given weight of the substance sold. Of course a new scale must be put in every time the price of the article sold is changed. The rules may be made in sets for use in weighing different kinds of goods, such as fruits, candies and groceries.

New Mexico miners found a cave recently. It was glorious with alabaster like stalactites and vast shining cones. While examining it they were attacked by a large cougar, which they killed.

Have the courage to provide for the entertainment of your friends within your means, and beyond it.

"Women of the world—that is, to what is called fashionable society—never use harsh expressions when condemning their rivals. Like the savages, they had elegant scruples, ornamented with features of purple and ——, but with refinement.

A bad temper defeats the skill of the best cook.